

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS #65

STEPS TO A GOAL #15

BUT UNTO EVERY ONE OF US IS GIVEN GRACE ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF THE GIFT OF CHRIST. 4:7.

When Paul speaks of every one of us, he means each and every member of the body. Whatever is given, is given to all. No one is left out.

The giving is not according to each person's capabilities, as with the talents and pounds, but is according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The body of the mystery is made up of members who are on an equality in every way. Some do not have more than others as was the case in the kingdom body in 1 Corinthians. In that body there was a diversity of gifts, some greater than others. In the kingdom some were given 5 talents or pounds, some 2, and some 1 talent or pound. But there is no such distribution among the members of the church which is His body today.

The gift of Christ refers to Him as given to be the Head of all things to the church. In John 3:16 God gave His Son as a sacrifice. He was not given to anybody, neither to the world or even to Satan (as a ransom). The giving there was on a different basis. The idea of sacrifice is dominant. But here in Ephesians Christ is given a position and that position is to be Head of the church. No sacrifice here.

Now the measuring stick or standard of the giving of grace to the members, is the Head as a gift. The gift is free and complete. There are no reservations. This gift is so perfect that it is not affected by sin in the believer. It is so complete that there is no need of good works to make it more complete. It is over and above and entirely without any consideration of sin and merit.

There was a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles during the Acts period. They were to live by grace without any deeds of the law. But they never had grace dispensed to them like as it is today to the dispensation of the mystery. After all, they were blessed in faithful Abraham and partook of the promises to Israel. Their dispensational position was so precarious that they were warned that they could be cut out of the olive tree of which they partook of the fatness. But this grace and favor dispensed today to the one body is not in any danger of being withdrawn. It is absolutely secure to each and every member of the body.

We must remember that grace has been shown to mankind ever since the fall. It was by grace that man was driven from the garden and made to work for his bread. It was by grace that he could approach the cherubim and offer sacrifice. No man has ever been saved but by grace.

But from Gen. 12 to Acts 10 living by grace was rather an unknown thing. Promises, covenants, law, all had conditions attached when it came to living. That one should live by grace was a hard question for the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15). But their conclusion was that Gentile Christians were not obliged to keep the law or observe ordinances and rites. They were to live under grace. At the same time the Jewish Christians were under the law. Not so today.

In the last paper we mentioned 3 classes of types used in the Word; *persons, Israel,* and the *rituals*. For the present we wish to take up the second one, the history of Israel as a type.

First of all we note that Israel is the subject of the Scriptures from Gen. 12 to the end of Acts, and then prophetically in the Revelation. In several places this line is broken. At times Israel lapsed into idolatry and then they were for the time being not God's people (Lo-Ammi).

We also note that there were greater and mightier nations that were hardly mentioned. In fact, other nations that are mentioned are those that came into contact in some way with this chosen nation. Otherwise they are not in the record at all. Yet the history of Israel is in a way typical of the history of God's dealing with the whole world. We do well to note many of these things and remember that tho this part of the Bible is not to and about us Gentiles, yet it is for us. We can learn much of value from it. *All Scripture is profitable.*

So God reveals that He has a purpose for Israel. But in that revelation is also shown that there is a similar and wider purpose for creation. One aspect of this truth can be shown in the institution of the Sabbath.

It was not till some 2500 years after Adam that it became generally known that God had recreated the earth in 6 days and rested on the 7th. That mankind should keep a Sabbath was never known till the law was given at Sinai. But there was more than just the weekly Sabbath given there. There was a pattern of Sabbaths that ran thru the whole system of ritual and worship.

God did not rest on the 7th day because He was tired. He rested because He had finished what He set out to do. We can see that God has been working during 6 millenniums (nearly so) and the 7th millennium is spoken of as a Sabbath of rest. It is the hope of Israel to come into this time of rest.

It is well to note the condition of the nations when God called out Israel. They did not glorify God as God. They did not like to even retain Him in their knowledge. They preferred to worship images; of man, four-footed beasts, and even creeping things. A great darkness had settled over the nations.

Among all this idolatry and false worship Israel was to be a witness. Their Sabbath would speak of the Creator and the nations would have it ever before them to remind them of God and His purpose. This keeping of the Sabbath was to be a sign between God and Israel, and also to the nations. It was to be for the age.

So in addition to this sign of the weekly Sabbath, we have the 70 X 7 in Daniel. We have the 7 X 7 ending in Jubilee. We have the 7 years at the end of which was to be a rest for the land. We have the 7 months of Lev. 23:24. Also the 7 weeks of Lev. 23:15 and the 7 days of Lev. 23:3.

All these are typical and should be studied diligently to see what they might mean.

OUTLINE STUDIES IN ROMANS #7

In 8:23 is mentioned the fact that believers had the firstfruits of the spirit. Unfortunately SPIRIT is spelled with a large S in most of our Bibles. It is not the Giver here, but it is the new nature which is implanted in the believer. Back in verse 11 we are told that it is by this new nature, that is in the believer, that resurrection is effected. Read it carefully. Make note of the fact that the Holy Spirit, the Giver, is mentioned only 4 times in this chapter, verse 16, twice in 26, and 27.

We have two Intercessors mentioned in this chapter, the Holy Spirit (vv. 26,27) and Christ (v. 34). This is a great comfort to the believer.

All things work together for good. This much is often quoted. But this is only a half-truth. There is a qualification. This is true only for those that love God and are called according to His purpose. We dare not take a limited truth and try to make it apply universally.

In verses 29 and 30 we have a chain. Each link is worthy of study. None of these links may be taken out of the chain without danger of a wrong application. We must not separate them. Note the sequence; *foreknowledge--predestination--calling--justification--glorification*. Five links, five the number of grace.

Adam was made in the image of the Son. He lost the image. But sons are predestined to be conformed to that image that was lost. Remember that Christ was the express image of God. Here is a wonderful hope. What can we add to these things?

Q 1. If God be for us, who can be against us? Why was it that God spared not His own Son? What will He withhold from us?

Q 2. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who justifies?

Q 3. Who is he that condemneth? The accuser stood at the right hand of the judge. But Christ occupies this place as our Intercessor.

Q 4. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Read carefully all the possibilities. None of these can. Can you think of any others that might? Is it possible that there could be any others?

We are more than conquerors thru Him that loved us. Again we must not neglect to quote all of it, In all these things (tribulations, persecution, etc.) we are super-conquerors.

Paul started this chapter with the words, THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS. He ends with saying that he is fully persuaded that nothing shall separate the believer from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. Note the list; *death--life--angels--princes--powers--things present--things future--height--depth--any other creature*. There is no creature so high nor any so low that can do this. What is left that might separate us?

This is a chapter of contrasts. Just skim thru and note them.

This is a chapter of hope. Make note of the various aspects of hope mentioned.

This chapter mentions, whole creation, whole race, whole salvation.

In Vol. 11, No. 1 we introduced this subject. Only a few observations could be made in the space at hand. In the Koine Greek the word can mean either *colonist* or a *colonial settlement* (see *Voices From the Silent Centuries* by Rimmer, 3rd ed. page 100).

With this information at hand, Moffatt has translated the phrase from Phil. 3:20, BUT WE ARE A COLONY OF HEAVEN.

The Philippians could well know what the word colony or citizenship would mean. Some time before this writing Augustus had made Philippi a *colonia* because of their aid in the defeat of Brutus (see Coneybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Chap. 9).

Note that we say they could *know* what the meaning of this citizenship was. We did not say that there was an *analogy*, and there are at least 5 reasons why there could be none.

1. Augustus never promised these people that he would adopt them or place them as sons. If so, they might have had some reason to believe that they could go and live with him in Rome. Now read Eph. 1:5.

2. Augustus never promised these people that they could live with him. They expected to go on living at Philippi. See 2 Tim. 2:11.

3. Augustus never thot of promising these people that some time they could reign with him in Rome. He was not sharing his rule with anybody. Read 2 Tim. 2:12.

4. Augustus never promised these people that *when* and *if* he had a great triumphal procession in Rome that they would be glorified with him and that he would see to it that they were properly transported there. Look at Col. 3:4.

5. Augustus never promised these people that they would be given houses and lands at Rome or free tickets to all the games and circuses there. They did not look forward to *any* nor by any chance, *all* the advantages that Rome had to offer. Read at this point Eph. 1:3.

But our colony, which has its citizenship in the heavens, has much to anticipate in the future. We have much to enjoy at the present, for all spiritual blessings also result in many material blessings (if you wish to put spiritual and material against each other).

Our Lord and Savior has made it possible that we have the adoption. There is to be no separation, but we are to live with Him. There is also a further reward of reigning with Him if we be willing to suffer with Him. We can look forward to being glorified with Him when He is made manifest to principalities in the heavens. We shall be there looking when that event occurs. But there is almost no limit to a further hope, to enjoy every blessing that is spiritual in the heavens in Christ!

Just what earthly experience or state could one imagine that could be the basis of analogy for such blessed hopes? What earthly terms can describe heavenly places? What material things can give a picture of spiritual blessings?

Words fail us. All we can do is believe and rejoice, giving thanks to God who does exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think.

THE COMMONWEALTH IN HEAVEN

BEGINNER'S CORNER #31

FOR OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN: FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Phil. 3:20

The words FROM WHENCE are usually assumed to refer to HEAVEN because they follow that word. The reasoning then is that since we are looking for Him from heaven, there is no difference between this hope of Phil. 3 and that of 1 Thess. 4 where the Lord descends with a shout.

Then the believer concludes that since 1 Thess. was written before Acts 28 and Phil. after, and that the hope seems to be the same, then Acts 28 is not the boundary. So he must go back to an earlier point, such as Acts 13, as the turning point.

Even the Greek is cited to prove the above approach. It is ek hou, which, standing alone, means OUT OF WHICH. *This might seem conclusive.*

But there is a matter of syntax to consider. Syntax is simply the relationship of words to each other in a sentence. WHENCE or WHICH is singular in number. But HEAVEN, to which it is supposed to refer, is plural in number. Hence the two just do not jibe.

To what then does WHICH refer? It must refer back to CONVERSATION, politeuma in Greek, meaning CITIZENSHIP or COMMONWEALTH, for politeuma is singular.

But we must still consider the word ek, OUT OF. Combined with its partner WHICH we have the phrase OUT OF WHICH. Since WHICH refers back to CITIZENSHIP, the thought is, OUT OF WHICH CITIZENSHIP.

Here is the key. It is OUT OF our citizenship in heaven that we derive our hope. Paul's point is not that the member of the joint-body is looking for the Lord to come down out of heaven. It is rather that by virtue of a citizenship in heaven we have a hope, an eager expectation. The Expositor's Greek Testament says regarding ek hou (out of which): "It seems needless to make this an adverb. HOU refers directly to politeuma..."

So it seems to this writer that we are forced by the inspired Word itself to note that the verse is not saying anything about the Lord coming out of heaven for the church of the Mystery. Rather Paul is giving the source of our hope to be far above all. Therefore the glorious change described in v. 21 will take place for His body, not in a resurrection accompanied by a shout of command, the archangel's voice and the trump of God, but in a quiet, secret one where Christ the Head and the church which is His body are united and manifested in glory (Col. 3:4).

Another point is worthy of note at this writing. Even the Greek word for IS in v. 20 demonstrates the substantial nature of this heavenly commonwealth. Rather than using the simple verb TO BE, eimi, Paul uses huparcho. Abbott-Smith's Lexicon gives 4 definitions of this word: 1, to begin, make a beginning; 2, to be in existence, be ready, be at hand; 3, to be; 4, to belong to. Especially fitting are 4 and 5. FOR OUR COMMONWEALTH EXISTS IN (or, belongs to) HEAVEN...!

--SIDNEY A. HATCH

Thru Paul, this hope that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, was revealed to the CHURCH OF THE ONE BODY. He had been separated by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2) for a peculiar ministry unto the Gentiles, that thru him might be made known the purpose of the ages (Rom. 1:1 & 15:16). THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE JOINT-HEIRS AND OF THE SAME BODY THRU HIS PROMISE TO CHRIST BEFORE AGE TIMES (Eph. 3:6). ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF THE AGES WHICH HE PURPOSED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD (Eph. 3:11). IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH GOD, THAT CANNOT LIE, PROMISED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN (Titus, 1:2). ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE WHICH WAS IN CHRIST JESUS (2 Tim. 1:1). Therefore Paul in Eph. 4:1 says, I THEREFORE THE PRISONER OF THE LORD, BESEECH YOU THAT YE WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED.

This takes us back to Eph. 1:3, BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST. Here is the hope and blessing of the church which is His body.

I should add, in passing, that the words, HEAVENLY PLACES are more rightly translated HEAVENLIES. This is amply proven in verse 20 where we learn that God thru the workings of His power raised His Son from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the HEAVENLIES. Then in chapter 2:6 we have the great parallel to this truth, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US--HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS.

When this is coupled with the promise that our citizenship is in heaven, that we will be made manifest in heaven when Christ is made manifest, leaves little room for doubt that here is a distinct and different hope. This is not the promise made to Abraham, or the twelve. One would have to be a mental contortionist to read into these phrases the rapture of 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4. Neither can we place it in the Revelation.

This is what Scripture records, not wishful thinking on the part of the writer. As one radio commentator said recently, without the Holy Scriptures none of us would ever have known God, but now that we know Him, we can learn more as the Spirit intercedes for us.

This then is the hope of those in the dispensation of the Mystery and are members of the church of the one body. A hope that had been kept secret, a purpose that had been hidden in God thru the centuries until it was given to Paul, to be revealed unto the saints and faithful.

Paul's letter to the Colossian saints continues in a like vein. We read in 3:3, FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM WHEREIN ALSO YE ARE RISEN WITH HIM THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, WHO HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD (2:12).

We must remember that it was thru Paul, and thru Paul alone, these things were revealed.

--DENTON C. ABBEY

THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE PASSOVER

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Two meals are spoken of in 1 Cor. 11.

Verses 20-22 and 33,34 concern a supper of or unto the Lord. It was a meal taken when they *came together*. It had its beginning in Acts 2:46 where all had sold their possessions and had things in common. They went from house to house having meals (breaking of bread) together. This was OK at Jerusalem, but in Corinth it did not work. Why? They had not sold possessions and did not have things in common. So when they *came together* for this meal unto the Lord, some had plenty and some had little or nothing to bring. Also they did not share as is indicated in verse 33.

Before this Paul spoke of their *coming together* and having divisions, which after all was a good thing, for it made manifest those who were genuine Christians. It also seems that they had not *come together* for the better, but for the worse, when the women did not properly take care of their hair (verses 3-17).

We have stressed the phrase *come together* for in the section concerning the observance of the Passover (verses 23-32) this phrase does not occur. It could not occur there for the Passover was observed *in the home by the family* and never when they came together in a meeting with other Christians. Recently somebody asked how the Passover got out of the home and into the assembly. That is a good question. How did it? Or did it? Did the so-called Lord's Supper as observed in assemblies today come from the Bible anywhere? Is there a single reference to it?

There is a strong suspicion in the minds of many that this communion or Lord's Supper, so-called, originated in the Babylonian sun worship where they partook of a wafer (round to resemble the sun; the Catholics use an exact replica of it) and drank a sip of wine. This was done at the temple where they assembled for worship. These wafers or cakes are spoken of in Jer. 44:19. Read the whole chapter.

The Passover was observed only in the homes of the Jews. It was not lawful for the Gentiles to observe it. They were not under the law. Our Lord observed this for He was a Jew. His disciples were also Jews. They would understand what the new covenant meant (Jer. 31:31). They also were looking for His coming again. They were to observe it till He should come. For about 1900 years His coming has not been the hope of any people, even tho many have mistakenly claimed it. So there was a time when the Passover was no longer a law to be observed. That was when the Jew lost his prior place and was included under the name *Gentile* in the epistles after Acts 28.

There is also another item overlooked in this passage. Those who observed the Passover unworthily had judgment come upon them as it did upon Ananias and Sapphira. This could only be upon Jews. The Gentiles were under grace and therefore judgment could not come upon them.

Of course, if you have read the address to this portion, you will find that it is to the Jewish believers in the church (10:1-5).

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